



**DARK
HORSE
COMICS**
ORCHID

4

\$3.50

ORCHID



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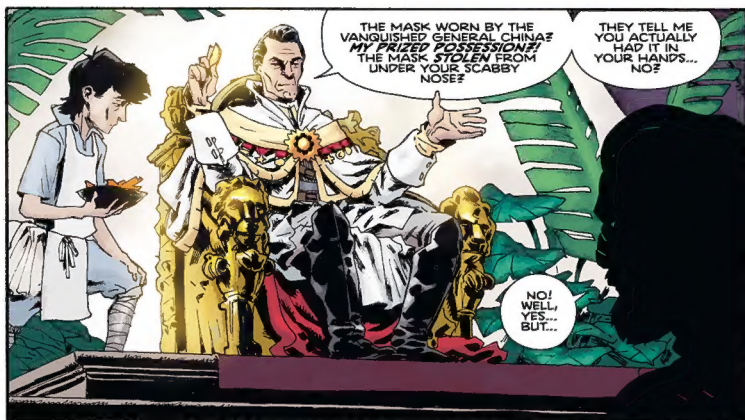
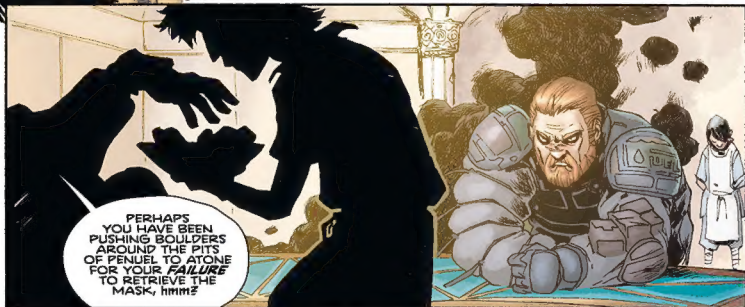
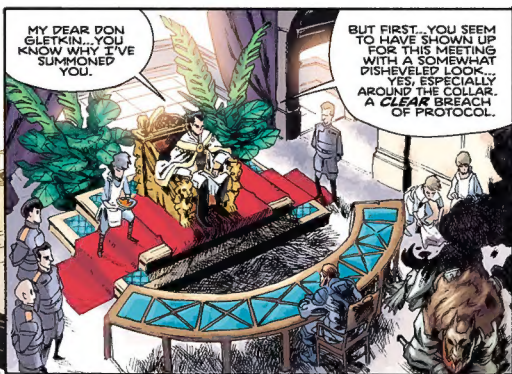
When the seas rose, genetic codes were smashed. Now, human settlements are ringed by a dense wilderness, from which ferocious new animal species prey on the helpless. The high ground belongs to the rich and powerful, who overlook swampland shantytowns from their fortresslike cities. Iron-fisted rule ensures order and allows the wealthy to harvest the poor as slaves. Welcome to the world of *Orchid*.

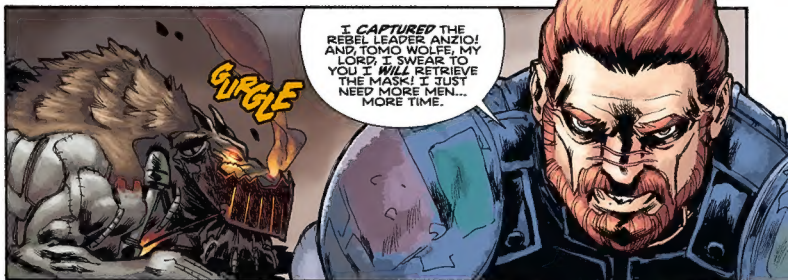
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**FORTRESS
PENUEL**

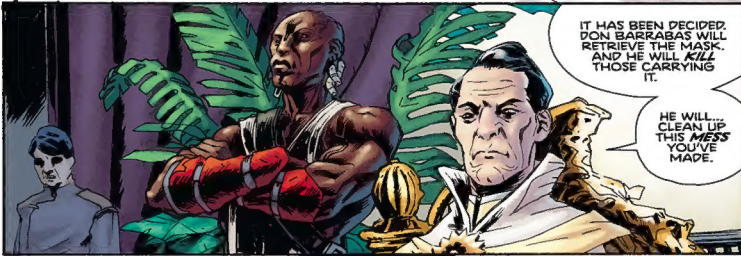









JOIN ME, MY FRIEND.
I AM SORRY FOR THE
MISUNDERSTANDING.



IT HAS BEEN DECIDED.
DON BARRABAS WILL
RETRIEVE THE MASK.
AND HE WILL **KILL**
THOSE CARRYING
IT.

HE WILL...
CLEAN UP
THIS **MESS**
YOU'VE
MADE.



MEANWHILE,
GET AS MUCH
INFORMATION AS YOU
CAN FROM THAT
"SHADOW REBEL"
VERMIN.

AND DON
GLETKIN...
DON'T
FAIL ME
AGAIN.

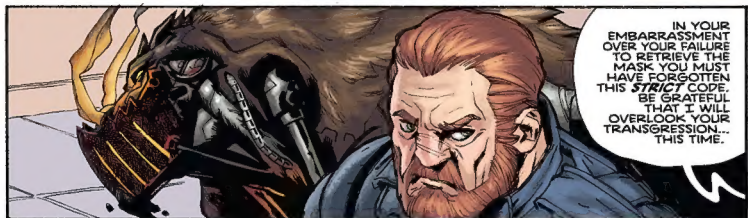




I WILL TRY TO PERSUADE DON BARRABAS TO FORGIVE YOU FOR YOUR LAPSE OF JUDGEMENT CONCERNING "THE FLY INCIDENT."

MY RESPECT FOR YOUR ESTEEMED COMRADE, DON BARRABAS, IS COMPLETE. HE DOES *VERY* IMPORTANT WORK FOR ME, AND HIS ABILITIES ARE... SINGULAR.

IN RETURN, I KEEP THIS SOLEMN VOW: **NO CREATURE, LARGE OR SMALL, WILL EVER BE HARMED IN FORTRESS PENUEL.** UNDERSTAND?



IN YOUR EMBARRASSMENT OVER YOUR FAILURE TO RETRIEVE THE MASK YOU MUST HAVE FORGOTTEN THIS STRICT CODE. BE GRATEFUL THAT I WILL OVERLOOK YOUR TRANSGRESSION... THIS TIME.



BZZZ

YOU SEE, HE IS MY MOST LOYAL SUBJECT.



ZZZZ

AND IF YOU KNEW WHAT I KNOW OF DON BARRABAS, YOU WOULD NEVER DOUBT HIS LOYALTY.

"IT IS SAID
BARRABAS
WAS BORN
IN ONE
OF THE
VILLAGES,
NEAR THE
EDGE OF
THE WILD."

PUSH!
PUSH!

OHHH!!

OH!!
OH!!

THAT'S IT!
HERE... HE...
COMES...

"HE WAS THE YOUNGEST OF NINE BROTHERS,
BUT EVEN FROM BIRTH HE WAS... DIFFERENT."

Oh
DEAR GOD!
THAT **CAN'T BE!**
WHAT... WHAT'S
WRONG WITH
MY BABY?!

WHAT
IS **THAT?!!**

"THE VILLAGE ELDER WAS WISE IN THESE MATTERS."

...AND...
WELL, WE
DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO
DO! HE'S...

NOW...
NOW...**PLEASE**
CALM DOWN,
YOUR OTHER
EIGHT SONS ARE
HEALTHY, YOU SAY?
BUT **THIS** BOY IS
MUTE AND HAS
A "DEVILISH"
APPEARANCE? COME NOW...

"THE VILLAGE ELDER WAS WISE IN THESE MATTERS."

...AND...
WELL, WE
DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO
DO! HE'S...

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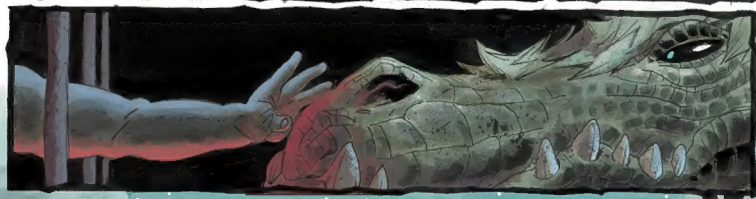
I'M SURE THE BOY JUST NEEDS THE SILK-BLOOD BLESSING. LET ME HAVE A LOOK...


I'M SURE THE BOY JUST NEEDS THE SILK-BLOOD BLESSING. LET ME HAVE A LOOK...

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

"BARRABAS'S
FAMILY DID
WHAT THEY
THOUGHT
WAS BEST."

THERE ARE
FRESH TRACKS
RIGHT ALONG HERE.
BIG ONES. IT'S NOT
CRUEL. IT'S THE ONLY
WAY. NOW NATURE
WILL...TAKE ITS
COURSE.






"BY NIGHT, THE ANIMALS OF THE WILD
BROUGHT HIM SUSTENANCE, BUT BY
DAY, BARRABAS'S LIFE WAS ONE SMALL
TORTURE AFTER ANOTHER."



HOW
DO YOU
LIKE *THAT*?
YOU MUTE
FREAKS!

Haha!
HE NEVER
EVEN
SCREAMS.
THROW IT
HARDER!



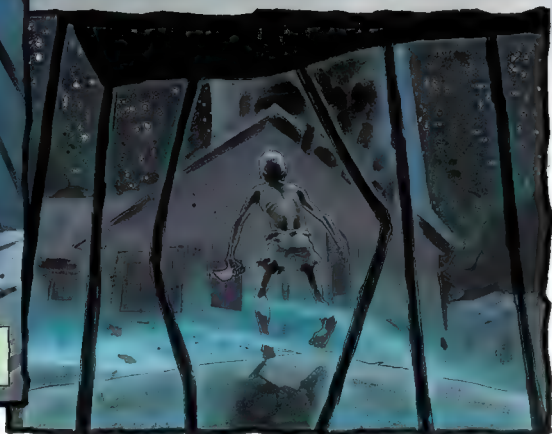
"AND EACH
YEAR BROUGHT
NEW TORTURE
FROM HIS
BROTHERS."



HA
HA
HA!
HA
HA
HA!
HA
HA
HA!

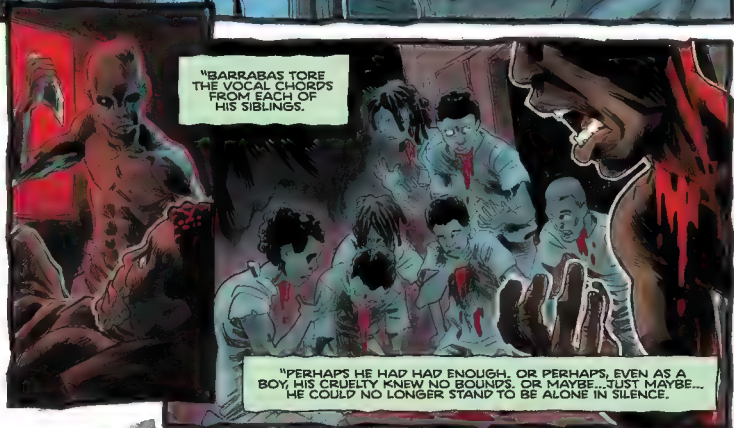


"UNTIL
ONE
NIGHT..."





"BARRABAS TORE
THE VOCAL CHORDS
FROM EACH OF
HIS SIBLINGS."



"PERHAPS HE HAD HAD ENOUGH. OR PERHAPS, EVEN AS A
BOY, HIS CRUELTY KNEW NO BOUNDS. OR MAYBE...JUST MAYBE...
HE COULD NO LONGER STAND TO BE ALONE IN SILENCE."

"HE WAS
JUDGED
ACCURSED,
A DEMON."

MONSTER!!

MURDERER!!

**GET
OUT!!**



"MYSTERIOUSLY, HIS
FORMER TORMENTORS,
THEIR WOUNDS STILL
RAW, FOLLOWED AFTER
HIM INTO THE WILD
TO SERVE AS HIS
DEADLY HENCHMEN."

"I WAS INTRIGUED BY RUMORS THAT SOMEWHERE OUT THERE WAS A MAN WHO HAD A CONNECTION TO THE MUTATED MONSTERS THAT POPULATE THE WILD, A LORD OF THESE BEASTS."

"I SEARCHED FOR YEARS, LOSING MANY MEN, AND I HAD BEGUN TO THINK HE WAS A LEGEND CONCOCTED TO SCARE BRIDGE RAT CHILDREN."

"AND THEN I FOUND HIM. *DEEP* IN THE WILD."



"HE WAS REAL. AND HE WAS BRANDISHING SCIMITARS FORGED FROM RAZOR-BEETLE PINCERS, SHARP ENOUGH TO CUT THROUGH TITANIUM MAGNATE. HIS EYES WERE DEAD, JOYFUL, AND UTTERLY CRAZY. I HAVE NOT OFTEN BEEN... THIS IMPRESSED. PERHAPS THE OTHER RUMORS WERE TRUE AS WELL."

HOW GOOD IT IS THAT YOU REALLY EXIST.



PUT DOWN YOUR GUNS.

BARRABAS! I SENSE THAT YOU MIGHT BE VERY... WHAT'S THE RIGHT WORD? *HUNGRY*. YES, THAT'S IT. *HUNGRY*. BUT EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT NOW.





HOW DOES IT
FEEL WHEN
HUMANS HURT
ONE OF YOUR
ANIMALS?

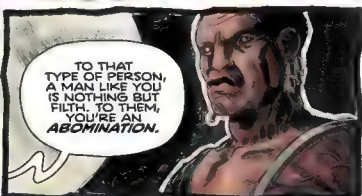
HOW DID IT
FEEL WHEN
THEY HURT
YOU? WHEN
THEY
TAUNTED
YOU?



YOU'D LIKE TO GET
EVEN WITH THE PEOPLE
WHO MOCKED YOU,
WHO *TORTURED* YOU,
WHO *DROVE* YOU
OUT...

WOULDN'T
YOU?

NOT JUST
THOSE PEOPLE,
BUT *EVERYONE* WHO
WOULD DO A THING
LIKE THAT...



TO THAT
TYPE OF PERSON,
A MAN LIKE YOU
IS NOTHING BUT
FILTH. TO THEM,
YOU'RE AN
ABOMINATION.



AAK!

BUT *I*
UNDERSTAND.



GAH!

MY
CONTEMPT
FOR HUMANS
IS EQUAL TO
YOUR OWN.



WE HAVE
SIMILAR NOTIONS
OF THESE PEOPLE'S
WORTH. HERE!
THESE GUNS ARE
A GIFT...

...BECAUSE
I NEED YOUR
HELP TO CONTROL...
TO...*INFLUENCE* THE
WILDLIFE.

TAKE THIS
DAGGER! TAKE IT, AND
I PROMISE YOU A *HOME*
WHERE YOU WILL NEVER
AGAIN BE AN OUTCAST!
NEVER AGAIN BE
TORTURED OR TAUNTED!
NEVER AGAIN BE...
ALONE.

I WILL PROTECT *ALL*
YOUR BELOVED CREATURES
WITH EVERY OUNCE OF MY
POWER AND *YOU* WILL
BE MY RIGHT HAND MAN,
A LIEUTENANT, HIGH IN MY
COUNSEL. *DO* BARABAS,
I SUSPECT, FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN YOUR LIFE, YOU
HAVE BEEN *CHOSEN*.

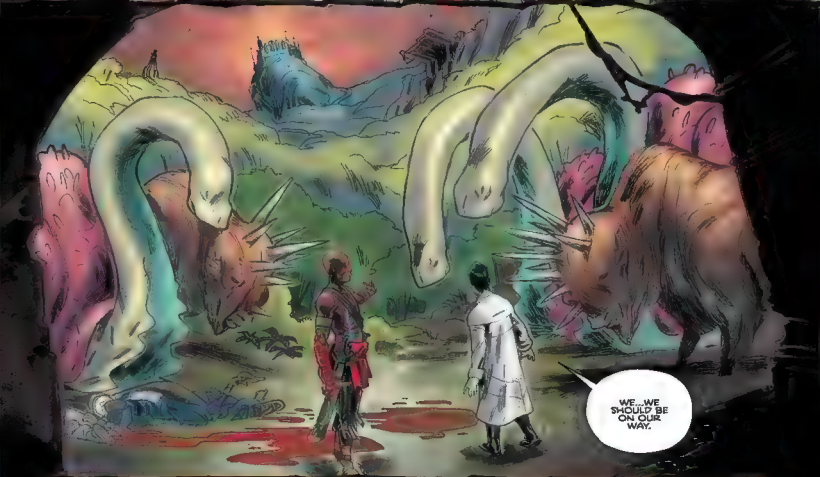
I'M GOING
TO SET YOU ON
THOSE WHO MADE
YOU SUFFER.





I DON'T
KNOW EXACTLY
WHAT YOU ARE,
BUT I HAVE A FEELING
YOU WILL BE VERY, VERY
LOYAL. HUNGRY FOR A
HOME. HUNGRY FOR
REVENGE. HUNGRY
FOR...A FRIEND.

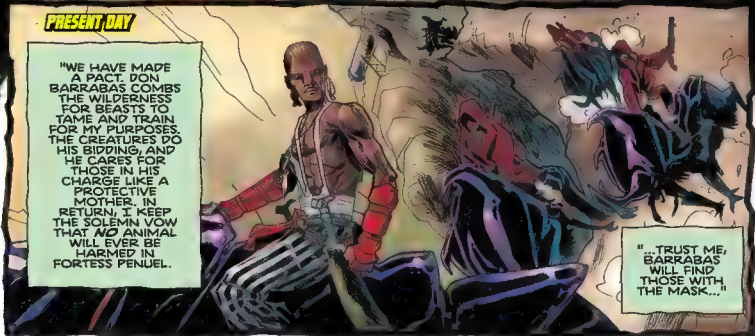
COME!
THERE'S
MUCH TO
DO...



WE...WE
SHOULD BE
ON OUR
WAY.

PRESENT DAY

"WE HAVE MADE
A PACT. DON
BARRABAS COMBS
THE WILDERNESS
FOR BEASTS TO
TAME AND TRAIN
FOR MY PURPOSES.
THE CREATURES DO
HIS BIDDING, AND
HE CARES FOR
THOSE IN HIS
CHARGE LIKE A
PROTECTIVE
MOTHER. IN
RETURN, I KEEP
THE SOLEMN VOW
THAT NO ANIMAL
WILL EVER BE
HARMED IN
FORTRESS PENUEL.



"...TRUST ME,
BARRABAS
WILL FIND
THOSE WITH
THE MASK..."

**BENEATH
THE WILD.**

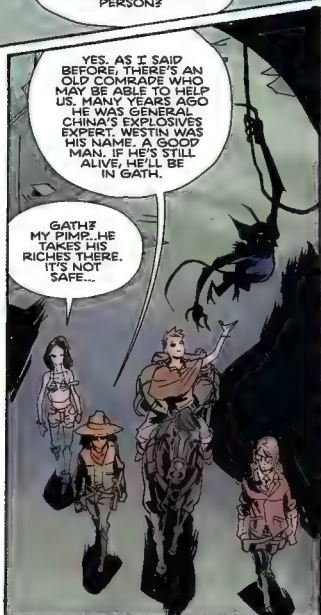
SIMON, OPAL HAS ASKED YOU *THREE* TIMES, AND THREE TIMES YOU AVOIDED THE QUESTION. WHAT EXACTLY IS THE PLAN TO RESCUE THIS ANZIO PERSON?

Um, right. YES. WELL... YEHZU CERTAINLY SEEMS TO BE GETTING ALONG WITH THAT SLIMY BAT CREATURE, DOESN'T HE? NORMALLY THEY'RE QUITE ORNERY, I'M UM, TOLD. HE ALWAYS SEEMS... SO... I SEE... WELL...

AND, UM, YES. SAY... OPAL... YOU MENTIONED AN *INTERESTING PERSON* WE MIGHT LOOK UP IN GATH, NO? UM... PERHAPS YOU SHOULD TELL...

YES. AS I SAID BEFORE, THERE'S AN OLD COMRADE WHO MAY BE ABLE TO HELP US. MANY YEARS AGO HE WAS GENERAL CHINA'S EXPLOSIVES EXPERT. WESTIN WAS HIS NAME. A GOOD MAN. IF HE'S STILL ALIVE, HE'LL BE IN GATH.

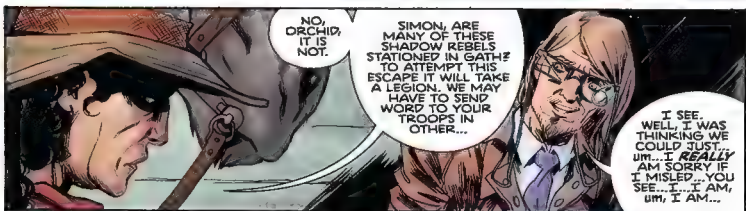
GATH? MY PIMP. HE TAKES HIS RICHES THERE. IT'S NOT SAFE...



NO, ORCHID, IT IS NOT.

SIMON, ARE MANY OF THESE SHADOW REBELS STATIONED IN GATH? TO ATTEMPT THIS ESCAPE IT WILL TAKE A LEGION. WE MAY HAVE TO SEND WORD TO YOUR TROOPS IN OTHER...

I SEE. WELL, I WAS THINKING WE COULD JUST... UM... I *REALLY* AM SORRY IF I MISLED... YOU SEE... I... I AM, UM, I AM...

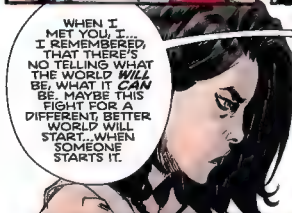


...THE ONLY SHADOW REBEL LEFT.

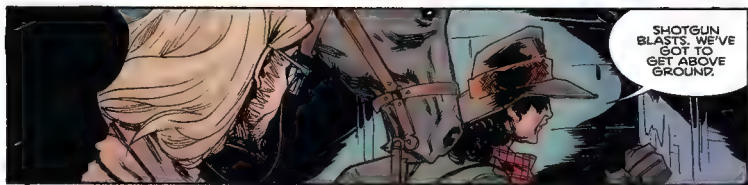
THAT MAKES *ONE*, OF COURSE. BUT PRESUMING THAT ANZIO IS STILL ALIVE, WELL, THEN THAT MAKES *TWO*, YOU SEE?

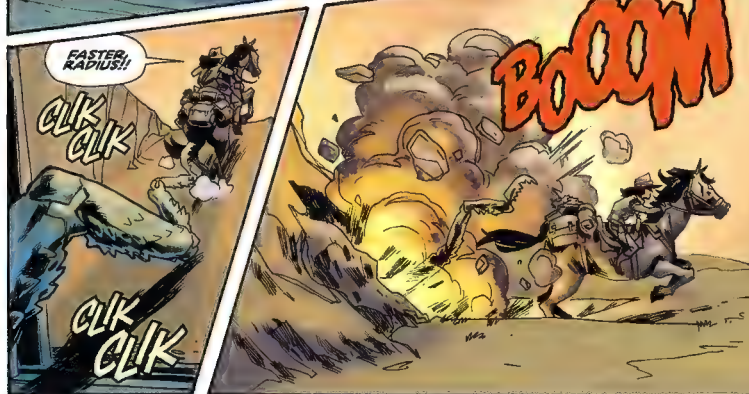
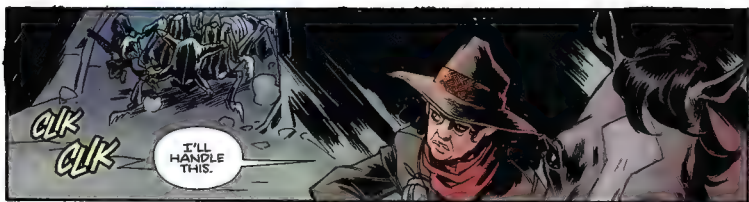
THERE WERE AS MANY AS *SEVEN* OF US AT ONE POINT, BUT... THINGS BEING AS THEY ARE... I THOUGHT... WELL, YEHZU'S QUITE YOUNG, OF COURSE, BUT MAYBE... THE TWO OF YOU...?













WHA—?



HEY!



YEHZU!!

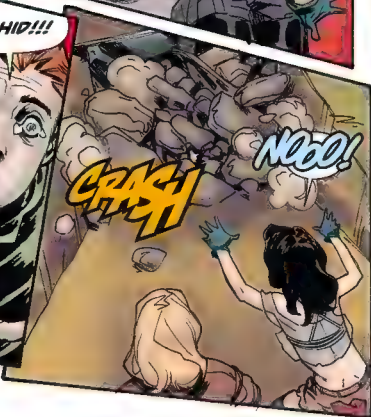


CLIK CLIK

ORCHID!!!
HELP
MEEE!!!

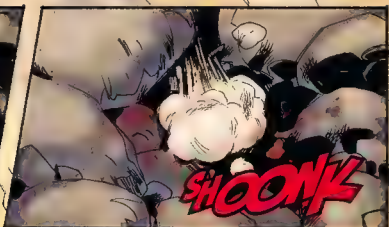
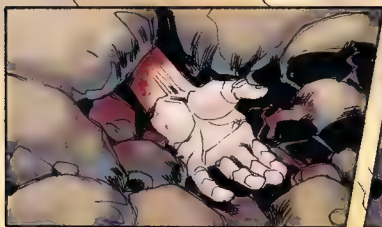


ORCHID!!!



CRASH

NOOO!



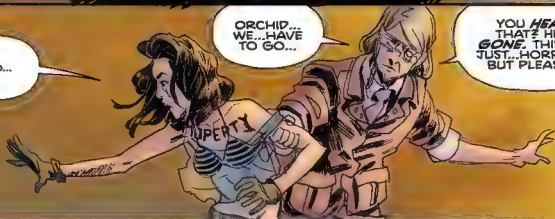
CLIK CLIK
CLIK



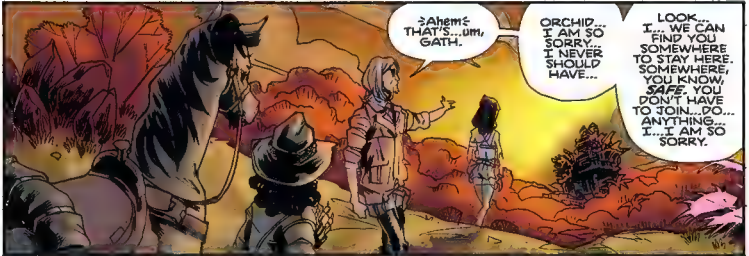
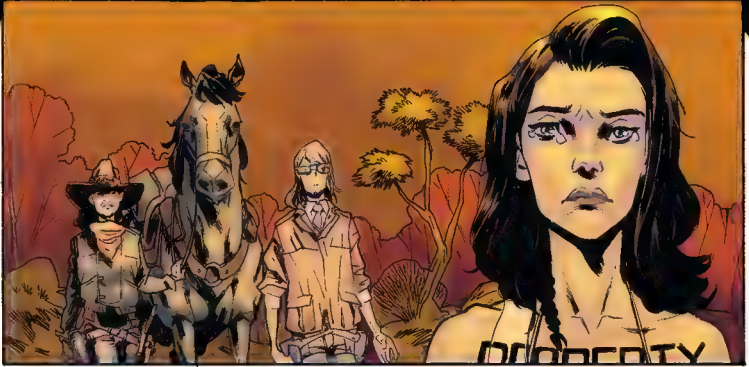
NO...

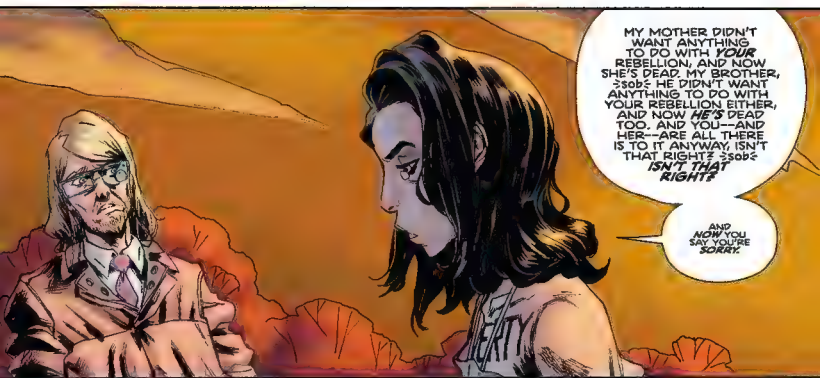
ORCHID...
WE...HAVE
TO GO...

YOU HEAR
THAT? HE'S
GONE. THIS IS...
JUST...HORRIBLE,
BUT PLEASE...



LATER...





MY MOTHER DIDN'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH *YOUR* REBELLION, AND NOW SHE'S DEAD. MY BROTHER, *350B2* HE DIDN'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH *YOUR* REBELLION EITHER, AND NOW *HE'S* DEAD TOO. AND YOU--AND HER--ARE ALL THERE IS TO IT ANYWAY, ISN'T THAT RIGHT? *350B2* **ISN'T THAT RIGHT?**

AND NOW YOU SAY YOU'RE SORRY.



WE'LL LISTEN TO ME, BOTH OF YOU, AND LISTEN *GOOD*. YOU'RE BOTH COMING WITH *ME* NOW.

I WILL NOT REST, *NOT A SINGLE MOMENT*, UNTIL I HAVE AVENGED THEIR DEATHS.



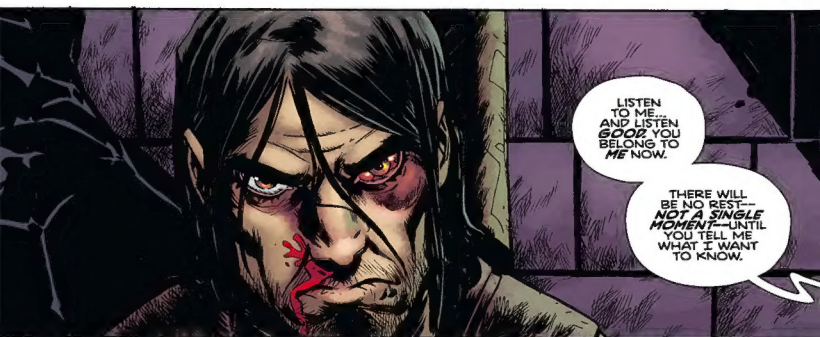
FORTRESS PENUEL.

SO... YOU *STILL* HAVE NOTHING TO SAY, ANZIO?

TELL ME WHERE YOUR COMRADES ARE AND SAVE YOURSELF TORMENT MAGNIFIED BEYOND YOUR KNOWING. I ASSURE YOU, THIS WHOLE PATHETIC EPISODE ENDS *NOW*.



YOUR
"SHADOW REBEL"
CRETINS? THEY'RE
DEAD. YOUR
HOPELESS CAUSE?
THAT'S DEAD TOO.
YOU'RE ALL THAT'S
LEFT OF A FUTILE
REBELLION.



LISTEN
TO ME...
AND LISTEN
GOOD YOU
BELONG TO
ME NOW.

THERE WILL
BE NO REST---
**NOT A SINGLE
MOMENT**--UNTIL
YOU TELL ME
WHAT I WANT
TO KNOW.



WHAT
DID YOU SAY
BEFORE, OLD
WOMAN?

"MAYBE
THIS FIGHT
WILL START
WHEN SOMEONE
STARTS IT"?
WELL...



AAAAAAHH!!

...THIS
FIGHT
STARTS
NOW.

TO BE
CONTINUED...

THE SHADOW REBEL READER

E-MAIL US AT: ORCHID@DARKHORSE.COM
WRITE TO US AT: THE SHADOW REBEL READER
C/O DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 ST. MAIN STREET, MILWAUKEE, WI 53222

To learn more about the world of *Orchid* and be entered to win exclusive prizes, text **ORCHID to 738674**. You don't have to buy a thing; we're just eager to explore innovative ways of bringing readers closer to the stories by providing unique content, news, and prizes.

Revenge: A powerful weapon that will finally force this comic's namesake fully into the limelight of this twisted and vast world. Up until now, *Orchid* has been pretty quiet, preferring to keep to herself and follow Simon as long as it suits her best. Survival is what keeps her together, especially when it comes down to the survival of her only family: her innocent brother, Yehzu. And with him dead, *Orchid* will take center stage, ready to follow Simon on his crazy mission so long as it gets her closer to the people who repressed, demoralized, and murdered her family. Hold tight, reader—you're about to meet *Orchid*.

Now to your letters:

Thank you so much for publishing this!

*I'm sixty-one, and *Orchid* #1 was my first comic purchase in forty years. By the time I got to the final panel, my heart was pumping and I began to eagerly await the next issue. Then the frustration set in at the realization that I had over three weeks before issue #2... I want more and I want it now!*

Michael S.

Hello,

*I'm writing to let you know that I find *Orchid* really interesting and a fresh breather from the glut of superhero comics on the market. Really love the fact that you guys make each issue available digitally the same day as print. More publishers need to do that. Keep up the good work!*

Mushfiqur Rahman, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Hi,

*I've never written in to a letter column before, but there's something about this comic that has broken my silence. I love comics and I love *Orchid* #1. I'm happy that you guys are delivering a comic that doesn't hold back. When the first kid got his*

head lopped off, I was happy (could've chosen my words better). I have seen celebrities embark on new mediums and get held down by censorship. So my happiness wasn't for the death and gore that ensued; it was that Tom Morello was getting his story told as intended. I know Dark Horse is open to things like this, but that celebrity thing had me worried. Anyway, back to the comic.

I really dig this world you guys created. It's unique. Even though it is set in a postapocalyptic setting, the details, like the genetic structure of animals being altered, the supernatural ties with the mask, and the way the civilization operates, really set it apart from the rest. The art is great. Scott Hepburn does an awesome job with the characters and environments, especially that crazy, multilegged, hairy crow thing. Oh, and I may be wrong but I feel like you guys are going to elaborate more on the things Simon thinks about as he enters the city, like the old veterans and—this may sound weird—the weird leech addicts. Those guys seem pretty interesting and I, for one, would like to know more.

Thanks for the good read/listen at an awesome price. Issue #2 comes out tomorrow and I'll definitely be getting it.

Minz

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and please return in March for issue #5. There will be a two-month gap between #4 and #5, marking *Orchid*'s new mission.

SMH
editor



Shadow Rebel leader in the hands of the enemy!
Orchid #5 on sale March 14, 2012

EACH ISSUE FEATURE'S NEW MUSIC BY TOM MORELLO.
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YEHZU126

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ORCHID

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